



A Strategic Plan for 2006-2011

Department of Social and Health Services



Dennis Braddock
Secretary
May 1, 2004



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A Letter from the Secretary

When we are meeting day to day demands of the challenging work of social and health services, it is difficult to take the time to step back and look at where we've been, and try to outline where we are going.

But that is a very necessary activity for an organization like ours that is so complex and impacts so many lives.

While we have done great work to serve those in need of our services, we are always asked to do more, and we are, across all the administrations, faced with major changes be it demographics, financing, political expectations, technology or theories about what is the best course of action.

In this maelstrom of often changing and opposing forces, we must act and we must plan ahead.

This Strategic Plan is the conceptual framework for our "planning ahead" as well as a guide for our budgeting process and interaction with the Office of Financial Management.

Key concepts you will find in this Plan are: customer focus, service integration, performance results, evidence based, community strengthening, workforce development and leadership.

We not only organize, manage and deliver services to those in need, but we also have a responsibility to the taxpayers and the consumers to provide leadership in assuring the most effective use of limited resources and advocacy for our goals.

We cannot lead well unless we have an accurate assessment of our strengths and weaknesses, and we must know where we are going. This document gives us an outline of our goals, our direction.

I want to thank all who worked to develop this Plan and especially thank Alice Liou who has so ably organized this effort.

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Purpose of This Document

This strategic plan communicates how we will advance our mission and goals in a changing environment and meet our future challenges, so that we can better serve the most vulnerable populations in Washington State. This document is a road map that guides the business policies and improvement strategies for our organization, employees and partners.

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Executive Summary

As an agency that serves one out of every five Washington residents, the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) is entering a time of particularly intense change and challenge.

While human services provided by local governments are overwhelmed by growing demands and shrinking revenues, DSHS is also experiencing difficulty in sustaining current programs and services within the constraints of today's state budgets. In addition, changes in our families, society, economy and health care system challenge us to think in new ways about what we really need to provide to our citizens.

This strategic planning blueprint is closely based on numerous thought-provoking discussions with our stakeholders, partners, customers and program staff. Although this plan cannot cover all specific information about each of our programs, it broadly reflects the department's direction and priorities in the following strategic goals.

- Improve the Health and Safety of Communities and Clients
- Improve Client Self-Sufficiency
- Improve Accessibility and Service Integration
- Improve Customer Service
- Improve Prevention and Care
- Improve Financial Resources Management
- Improve Quality Assurance and Business Practices
- Improve Eco-Environmental Sustainability
- Improve Workforce Development and Diversity

As DSHS employees, we value our clients and strive for high standards of personal responsibility and accountability. We have an abundance of compassion for people of all ages who need help and opportunity. To that end, we will:

- Continue to engage the citizens in shaping a comprehensive human service system, and carry on our conversation about what the people in Washington believe to be the necessary level of services;
- Help our policy makers – the governor and legislators – translate our values into laws, budgets and programs, so that public policies can be consistent with what the public values; and
- Continue strengthening our internal capacity including technology, workforce, performance management, and partnership with Tribes and communities.

We thank all our partners and stakeholders who contributed their thoughts and feedback during this planning process. It was with their input that our planning team was able to develop this plan to guide our future services and operations.